

FoPI Flyer

July 2010

In this edition

Permanent home for exhibition	1
The exhibition opening	2
Leprosy in the world today	2
Bird watching treat	4
The Birds of Peel Island	5
Peel's Inebriate Asylum	6
End notes	8

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Permanent home for exhibition

Her wonderful paintings of Rosemary Opala's poems about life on Peel Island provided an ethereal atmosphere to the original 'going to the gums' exhibition at Redland Museum. Finally Ruth Venner was able to attend the opening of the exhibition (photo below, 5 May 2010) at its new permanent home at Fort Lytton National Park, where a number of her drops are hanging.

More than 50 people gathered on a fine afternoon for the exhibition, but also to listen to Fred Bruinsma from The Leprosy Mission Australia (TLM). He talked eloquently and passionately about the ongoing work of this organisation, including in East Timor and PNG, helping bring treatment, dignity and acceptance of people suffering this disease.

This day also provided the perfect opportunity to 'unveil' the replicas of the lazaret totems, made by local artist Troy Robbins, courtesy of a grant from CRL.

Thanks to all those who made the day possible by generously donating their time and effort. Continued over...



Hugo Ree and his wife appreciating the newly hung exhibition



The exhibition opening



Unfortunately Troy Robbins (2nd from R) couldn't make it to the exhibition opening, and placement of his sculptures. So, a video of him, being interviewed by Debra Henry (2nd from L) at the Cleveland Museum, was shown instead. Thanks to Caitlin Maynard (L) who made the video as part of a school project, under the supervision of Wayne Cass (R), her media teacher at Cleveland State High School; thanks also to Rhonda Bryce (C) for the idea and making the arrangements. Sculptures of Roo, (Fish, not seen here) and Pineapple at home in the garden of Fort Lytton Conference Centre (below R), where the exhibition 'going to the gums' has also found a permanent home.



Joanna Besley (Brisbane Museum) and Bruce Ely on accordian, on the veranda. Photo courtesy Rhonda

Thanks to Scott Fowle and Peter Hubbert for working out how to erect the statues safely and securely.

A plaque is attached to each sculpture.



Leprosy in the world today

The Leprosy Mission (TLM) committed to the empowerment of individuals, families and communities affected by leprosy or at risk of the disease. Such people often suffer from lack of choice and are usually powerless to change their situation.

TLM wants to help them enlarge their choices and to encourage and enable them to take part in decisions affecting their lives.

TLM's goal is empowerment; not dependency. Empowerment enables each person to reach their potential as a full participant in their community, which gives them pride, dignity and a sense of worth. In the end, we want to hear people say, "I've been cured of leprosy AND I am a valued and respected person."

TLM works in partnerships with individuals and communities in 29 countries worldwide in order to restore and enhance human dignity, self-reliance and quality of life. The Leprosy Mission does all of its work in and under the name of Jesus Christ.

Over 2000 national and international staff work together to provide appropriate medical, educational and other services.

The Leprosy Mission Australia concentrates its focus of work within India, Nigeria, D.R Congo, Papua New Guinea, East Timor, Nepal, Thailand and Myanmar.

Source: www.leprosymission.org.au

Working bee update

Colleen Hubbert

The June working bee was a very successful weekend. The table on the verandah got a good sanding and paint job from Scott Fowle, while Ian Shackleton weeded and mulched the gardens.

Meanwhile, the girls tackled the mother of millions and put them under black plastic at the quarry to be 'cooked' in the sun.



A small but keen crew



Scott Fowle



Ian Shackleton



Adrienne Shackleton



Mette Juel

All photos courtesy Colleen Hubbert

Bird watching treat

So many times when FoPI members visit Peel, it is for the purpose of weeding, tidying, sorting, painting, acting as tour guide or any other useful activity. It felt like such a luxury then to visit Peel recently for the express purpose of seeking out and enjoying the island's birds.

While there we also took the opportunity to check out the hut which was used as a Catholic Church until the Lazaret closed; the old well, built for the quarantine station; and the old bakery/jail to see how it fares now that the strangler fig has been dealt with by QPWS last year - there are signs the fig is trying to regrow.

Our thanks to Dr Peter Woodall for his company, sharp hearing and superb knowledge of the local birds; and for his generosity in sharing his knowledge with us. His account of our trip is in the following article.

Thanks too, to Mette Juel for organising us, and QPWS rangers Jacques Frugte and Mark Callanan.



L-R: Peter Woodall, Mette Juel, Dianne Hollands, Peter Ludlow, Brian Isaac, Phyllis Ludlow, Gabi van Willigen. Photo courtesy Colleen Hubbert



Fig on old quarantine station building.



Brian Isaacs (above) at the old well, looking incredibly stylish in a FoPI hat. The bright colour meant that even among the thick undergrowth and woodland we always knew where Brian was!

Checking out the condition of what used to be the island's Catholic Church - investigations currently underway to see if this building can be restored. L-R: Peter Woodall, Brian Isaacs, Peter Ludlow. Photo Gabi van Willigen

The Birds of Peel Island

by Peter Woodall

The birds of Peel Island are very well known thanks largely to the efforts of one of its early inhabitants, Noel "Laddie" Agnew. Noel was the youngest son of Philip Agnew, the Postmaster at Dunwich on North Stradbroke Island. He was described as a friendly, outgoing boy who frequently performed at concerts for the patients at Dunwich so there was great consternation when he developed the symptoms of Hansen's disease in 1907. The lazaret, with 17 patients including Noel who was only 12 years old, was then moved from Dunwich to Peel Island.

Noel remained on the island until his death in 1937 and during this time he developed a keen interest in the birds of the island and published three articles in Australia's ornithological journal, *The Emu*. He lists 136 species in these articles but writes about a total of 161 species so there are 25 "missing" species from his lists. Considering the lack of good field guides at that time this was an outstanding effort.

In the 1990's, I visited the island to record the birds and to investigate how the species may have changed over the 80 years since Noel was active there. I made 23 visits covering all months of the year and recorded 95 species¹.

These included 31 species not listed by Noel Agnew but it is likely that some of these are among the 25 "missing" species mentioned above. Noel also recorded over 50 species that I failed to find.

Some of these may have been misidentifications, others were rare visitors and vagrants but others probably reflect true changes in the avifauna, such as the White-fronted Chat which has become extinct in south-east Queensland.

In July 2010, I was kindly invited to join a group from FoPIA to have another look at the birds of Peel Island. We were lucky to have excellent weather over the weekend and compiled a list of 52 species, including one which I hadn't recorded in the 1990's – a Galah!



Mette Juel, Peter Ludlow, and Peter Woodall. Photo courtesy Gabi van Willigen

There were also some species that we failed to record. The absence of the introduced Spotted Turtle-Dove can probably be explained by the removal of the caretaker's poultry and is no great loss but others such as the Emerald Dove would be of more concern but it needs more surveys to confirm this.

My thanks are due to the friendly members of FoPIA and Ranger Mette Juel for a memorable visit to the island.

¹ Woodall, PF 1999. The birds of Peel Island, Moreton Bay: eighty-five years on. *Sunbird* 29(1):13-23.



Watching birds at sunset, on the western 'jetty' - Mette Juel, Brian Isaacs, Colleen Hubbert, Dianne Hollands, Peter Ludlow and Peter Woodall. Photo Gabi van Willigen

Peel's Inebriate Asylum by Peter Ludlow

In 1910 there had been trouble with the inebriate (drunkard) inmates at the Benevolent Asylum in Dunwich, so the authorities shifted them to nearby Peel. George and Agnes Jackson were given the task of running the new Inebriate Asylum which had been established in the old Quarantine Station buildings. George Jackson, officially known as the Chief Attendant, looked after the male inebriates. His wife, Agnes, as Matron, attended to the females. All the patients were white. Dr. Linford Row, Medical Superintendent of the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, was responsible for the health of the inebriates on Peel.

The old quarantine buildings stretched in a line along The Bluff, and commanded a magnificent view to the east across the short expanse of water towards Dunwich. When the Inebriate Asylum took over in 1910, the Jacksons occupied the former doctor's quarters. The male inebriates occupied the former female steerage passengers quarters to the north, and the female inebriates the officers quarters to the south.

People were sent to the Inebriate Asylum to dry out. There were two types of patients: public and private. Private patients, or their relatives, had to pay one Guinea a week for board and lodgings. Public patients had to earn their keep by working.

As well as performing basic chores, patients were encouraged to make furniture, or work in the mattress

factory. This latter was situated at the back of the stone jetty, below the Asylum. It consisted of a large wooden shed through which could be driven a horse and cart. Grass collected from the island was unloaded onto a platform on one side of the shed ready to be stuffed into mattresses. When completed, these were stored on a platform on the other side for the use of the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum.

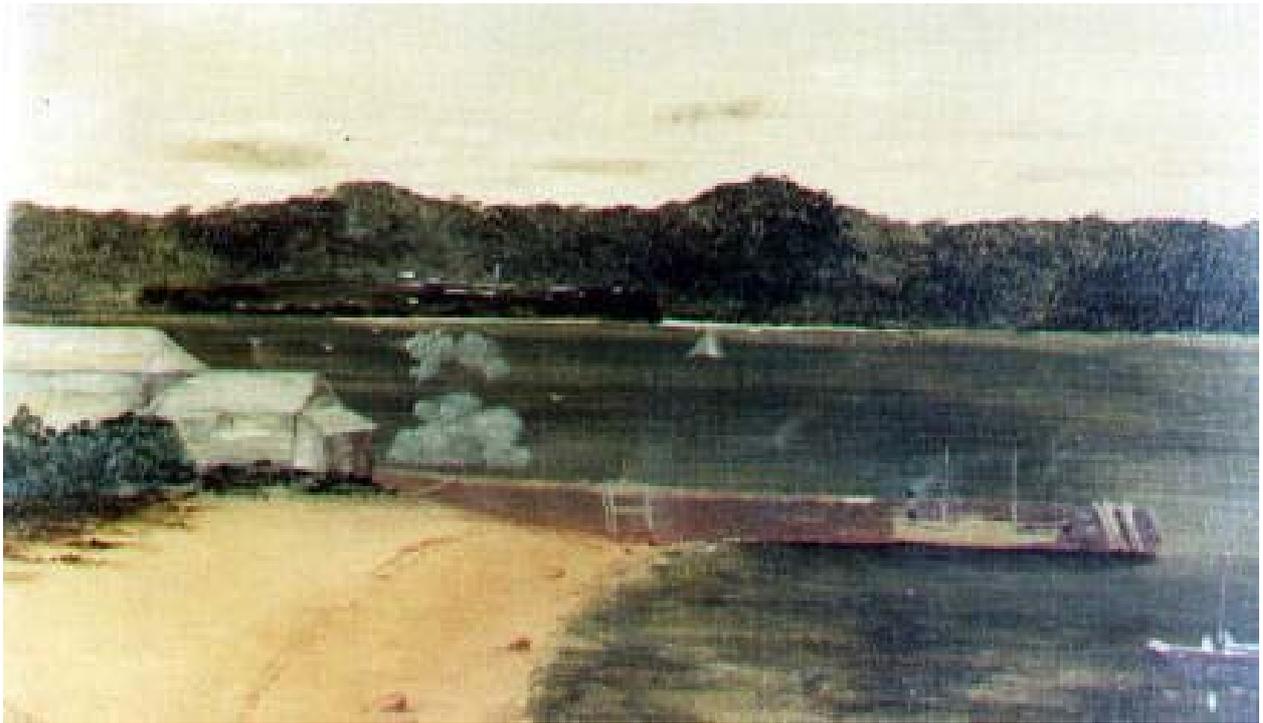
Once, when the SS "Koopaa" was hove to off the jetty, a stray spark ignited the grass in the shed and the whole building went up. The "Koopaa"'s passengers ran to the rail to watch. Being a vessel of very shallow draft, it nearly tipped over! The building was totally destroyed, leaving only a few charred stumps for posterity.

George Jackson was of the belief that work kept people out of trouble. A master with a scythe, he trained many patients in the use of this cumbersome instrument. By their labours, the many hectares of grass on the Bluff were always kept well cut.

Records do show that considerable unrest resulted from one particularly unpleasant job the inmates were required to perform. There were 16 toilets at the Asylum, each with its own W.C. pan. The regular emptying and burying of their contents was not the most favoured job. Indeed, for the unsteady patient, it could be decidedly risky! So in 1912, the inmates revolted and demanded



Inebriates' home; painting by William Simmons 1910



Stone jetty and shed; painting by William Simmons 1910

that outside labour be brought in to perform this unpleasant task. The Chief Attendant responded by withdrawing the patients' rations of tobacco, butter, and breakfast meat, and by locking the offending inmates in the corrugated iron enclosure of the men's compound.

One private patient who was having trouble meeting his weekly payments was also put in with the 20 offending inmates. Their foul language caused him to write to his relatives for the necessary money to release him from "this most awful degraded Hell I can imagine darkening God's earth." His relatives supplied the necessary cash.

The quarantine station's telegraph had been dismantled when the Inebriate Asylum took over the buildings. For possible emergencies, then, a rifle was always left loaded and ready for use just outside the door of the Jackson's house. A couple of quick shots would attract the attention of the authorities at Dunwich just across the water, and help would be sent. Fortunately, the rifle was never fired.

The Inebriate Asylum operated for seven years from 1910 until 1916 when the inmates were returned to Dunwich, and the wooden buildings demolished. George Jackson took up a teaching position at the Queensland Agricultural College, Gatton.

William Simmons

One of Peel's inebriate patients was William Simmons of Brisbane who was convicted on July 20th 1910 of being found drunk on 19th July in Herston Road. Under

the Licensing Act of 1885 (section 84) because he had no less than three convictions against him within the preceding twelve months, he was sentenced to submit to a curative treatment term of twelve months at the Institution for Inebriates, Peel Island.

On 30th January 1911 Dr Row, the Medical Superintendent, recommended to the Under Secretary, Home Department, that three months leave on probation be granted and that a railway pass to Rockhampton be given to him.

William Simmons was released on February 6th. On 8th February Dr Row wrote that on giving Simmons his pass he found that he had no money so gave him 10/-. Dr Row asked for a refund and also that Simmons be granted a further £1 at Rockhampton, and then 10/- per week by Rockhampton police until work was found. In this way the police could keep an eye on him. It was granted on the condition that the terms of probation be strictly adhered to.

There is no further reference to him, so hopefully William Simmons made good.

While an inmate at Peel, William Simmons painted several oil colours of his surroundings. Two of which are reproduced here.

Peter Ludlow
28.7.2010

Note: The official name was "Institute for Inebriates" - Rhonda Bryce

End notes

RIVER ACCESS TO FORT LYTTON

Jackie Butler

Heritage groups are rejoicing that **\$352,000** was allocated in the State budget for a pontoon to replace the condemned quarantine jetty at Fort Lytton, as requested by a petition circulating for many years.

Arguably Brisbane's prime heritage riverside site, Fort Lytton, Australia's only moated fort, has a splendid Military Museum, Signals Museum, Peel Island Lazaret display, and the grand old Quarantine building used for displays and conferences.

Sir Charles Kingsford Smith's TAA Brisbane to Sydney terminus was at Lytton, and it would be appropriate to relocate his *Southern Cross* plane to Lytton Heritage Park, especially as few even know it exists now it is hidden away beside the old road to the Brisbane Airport.

(Jackie is a volunteer at Fort Lytton National Park, as well as member of the Tingalpa Cemetery Heritage Group).

Cleveland History Fair



Peter Hubbert & Scott Fowle taking to visitors from the Caloundra Local History group who purchased a book of the Exhibition.

Photo courtesy Rhonda Bryce.

Memberships due July 2010

A reminder that membership fees are now due for everyone who joined BEFORE 1 March 2010. Those who joined after 1 March will carry on till 30 June 2011. Payments can be made by cheque / money order or direct debit.

Full Membership - \$16.00

Pensioner, Student & Junior Membership - \$12.00

Organisation Membership - \$40.00

Direct deposit to: Commonwealth Bank of Australia, BSB 064-000; Account 10649391.

Reference: 'Mship' + your name. Let the Treasurer know you've made a deposit - email rosaleencarroll@bigpond.com

Send cheques or money orders to:

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